

THE CABINET;

A REPOSITORY OF

POLITE LITERATURE.

No. VII.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1811.

MISCELLANY.

ORIGINAL.

THE PERIPATETIC.—No. 2.

Continued from page 81.

Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !

SCOTT.

GIVE encouragement to the early practice of writing, and complaints that the style of American compositions is always either barren or redundant, will soon cease to be grounded in correctness.

To draw from the erudite the fruits of studious industry, allure him from the solitude of his library, by the smile of confidence ; and not meet him on the threshold, with the frown of severity, or the sneer of contempt.

Cynical critics shut their eyes when specimens of American genius are exhibited. Censorious epithets are reiterated, on the appearance of every native literary pro-

duction. That the hardihood of criticism has not extended the tone of indiscriminate censure, to the works of Ames and Hamilton; luminaries whose light still beams on us with splendour, although they revolve no longer in our literary hemisphere; is indeed true: but the rays of genius emitted from orbs of lesser magnitude, have been uniformly dimmed by the mists of prejudice, or wholly hidden by the clouds of malevolence.

In the pages of our self constituted judges of American erudition, is scarcely found a paragraph of praise, bestowed on attempts to rescue the literary fame of our country from the obloquy which has surrounded it; while tart remark and biting sarcasm, are too frequently discoverable.*

To the dread of literary assassins, may more fairly be attributed the unfrequent exertion of talent among the erudite and scientific, than to the smallness in number, of those who have ability to produce works of taste and genius.

Let the conductors of the press, who may be compared to the superintendant of an inn, cease to give to the traveller on the literary road, an inhospitable reception, because splendid adornments are not conspicuous in his costume; for a man may be rich in science who first presents himself in a garb little calculated to inspire respect. Let us leave to foreigners the invidious task, of belittling the American character, and with united energies, strive for the palm of eminence, with the learned of our parent state.

* Let the reader examine the volumes of the Monthly Anthology from its first establishment, for a confirmation of these assertions. The editor of the Port Folio has recently displayed liberality in his remarks on American literature; but recur to former volumes of that journal, and it will be found, that he has not been sparing of uncourteous criticism. In the new review of Mr. Walch, we are happy to discover a disposition, to foster the literature of our country, which notwithstanding churlish insinuations, gives promise of vigorous maturity.

It has been asserted that the acquisition of wealth, is the sole object of the persevering efforts of our countrymen; and that few men of fortune have devoted any part of their riches, to the advancement of learning. This may have been true, but it cannot be denied, that many who have attained this desired object, have bestowed on their children more perfect and liberal education; and that wealthy and ignorant are not now synonymous terms. Let it become unfashionable to decry American literature without examination;—original works will be multiplied by native authors, and receive from native patronage ample and deserved support.

Y.

THE AMERICAN REVIEW.

We have perused with unalloyed satisfaction, the first number of Walch's Review. The commencement of a new journal under the management of a gentleman, the vigour of whose intellect and the strength and brilliancy of whose compositions, have already been conspicuously displayed, in an epoch of no ordinary interest, in the literary history of our country. The high expectation, with which we waited for the present work has been amply gratified, and if its future numbers are continued with equal spirit, they cannot fail of effect in "the propagation of sound political doctrines, and the direction and improvement of the literary taste of the American people." The following extract from the review contains a part of the remarks, on "an Italian history of the war of the independence of the United States,"—"Storia della guerra dell' Indipendenza degli St. Uniti d'America"—published in the commencement of the present year at Paris, and written by Carlo Botta a distinguished member of the academy of Turin, and of the legislative body of France."

THE history of our Revolution, although embracing a vast theatre of action, and a great multiplicity of events, is, nevertheless, justly viewed and admired by Mr. Botta, as a perfectly consistent and beautiful whole. Although the scale of movement is immense, the movement itself is

simple and circumscribed, both as to time and object. It has, as it were, all the unities—its regular exposition, its intrigue, and its denouement. The object is distinctly seen from the outset; obstacles intervene, but the plot thickens; the glorious aim is at length successfully achieved, and the nature of the catastrophe such as to exalt the dignity, and to heighten the interest of the whole representation. We wish we could add that nothing has since occurred, to weaken the impression, which was then left upon the minds of the world!

There was too, in our war, a sort of climax,—a regularly increasing complication and variety in the means, which renders the march of events still more interesting. First the contests between England and her Colonies alone:—then the intervention of France; afterwards the implication of Spain and Holland:—subsequently the combats of the fleets, both on the American and European seas;—the battles of the armies on the two continents, and finally, by the union of all these powers, the humiliation of England, and her compulsory recognition of those colonists as an independent people, whom she had, in some sort, driven into independence, by her oppression and injustice.

To all the other sources of dramatic interest which this war may be said to possess, there must be added, the moral dignity of the personages, who officiated in the scene. The American actors engaged in it, both in the senate and in the field, have, we can venture to assert, juster claims to the respect and affection of mankind, than any other patriots on the records of history, whether we look to the purity of their motives, to the wisdom of their measures, to the sustained force and persevering temperance of their resolution, to their fortitude in adversity, or to the consummation and consequences of their enterprize. They acquired political fame and military glory, but these they

did not seek ; they had but one object and reward in view in all their labours and sufferings, and that was, the independence of their country. They hallowed their pious work, and put the seal upon their own glorious immortality, by erecting, in the fabric of our constitution, what we trust will prove, both a fixed habitation, and an impregnable fortress for liberty. Among them, was one character, of an heroic elevation known only, perhaps, to the *legends of Antiquity*, and of which no other example has been seen in modern times. Almost all nations have concurred in ascribing to the hero of our Revolution, a combination of public and private virtues, such as never before fell to the lot of any one of the human species to whom Providence had assigned a distinguished part on the theatre of the world.

Our Italian author appears to have felt the moral sublimity which accompanies the name of Washington, and acknowledges that he was such a principal figure, as was best suited to the "history piece" of the American war, and alone fitted to perfect the majesty of the canvass. Mr. de Botta dwells *con amore* upon what he considers as the closing scene of our Revolution ; we mean the abdication of the chief command by General Washington, before the Congress assembled at Annapolis. Whoever, in fact, will meditate upon all the recollections and the hopes connected with this proceeding, must admit, that it exhibited a more august and affecting spectacle, than any other to be found either in the exhibitions of History, or in the creations of poetic fancy.

What, if we admit the superiority of moral over every other species of grandeur, when compared to this resignation of General Washington, was that of Charles the fifth, upon which the historian Robertson descants with so much pomp of sentiment and language ? Upon which of these

two objects—upon the American President in his retirement, or upon Bonaparte in his Imperial mantle,—does even the eye of an Italian writer dwell with most complacency? We consider it as fortunate for the present generation, that they have within their own memory a spectacle like our revolution, and such an example as that of Washington, to refresh and revive the moral sense, which pines and withers at the aspect of the scenes lately acted in France, and of the character of the sovereign of the European Continent. It is truly a merciful and admirable dispensation of Divine Providence, that there should be placed, by the side of the gigantic depravity now exhibited in the other hemisphere, a moral excellence of proportions not less colossal, to vindicate as it were, his own moral government of man, and the reputation of human virtue.

We consider it also as an edifying tribute paid by vice to virtue, and as a signal testimony in favour of the merits of our revolution, and of the character of Washington, that a panegyric upon either, of the nature of the one which this history affords, should be permitted to issue from the press in France. It has become a systematic plan with the French ruler, and the main drift of almost all the histories now published in Paris, to vilify the free governments which have at any time existed in modern Europe, and to decry the illustrious achievements and models of patriotism, that antiquity presents to the reverence and imitation of the wise and the good. But there is something so pure and venerable in the revolutionary history of this country,—so pre-eminently exalted, and so victoriously sacred in the character of the great American patriot—that they have triumphed over the ferocious and malignant spirit of a despotism, which studiously proscribes the exhibition of every other picture of republican or civic virtue, and to which they are, nevertheless, a heavier reproach,

and a more humiliating contrast, than any other historical tissue that human actions or human character can furnish.

We cannot, moreover, refrain from remarking, that we involuntarily feel every commendation, which is pronounced abroad, upon the actors of our revolution, and every narrative of their noble history, as a reproach in some respects to those, who are now reaping the rich harvest of their toil. The more exalted their services and virtues, the greater is the shame which attaches to this country, for the species of oblivion into which both their names and their example appear to have fallen. If we continue to pursue the path which we have trodden for the three last years, we shall, instead of securing the advantages which they won, and of rendering liberty venerable in the eyes of all mankind,—as it is yet fully in our power to do,—not only forfeit our inheritance of felicity and glory, but for ever shame republican freedom from the face of the earth. Although we have the testimony of our senses to assure us of the fact, it is yet scarcely credible to our imagination, that this country should stand in its present attitude towards France; that there should exist in the United States, at this moment, no great national memorial of Washington and his associates;—or that there should not be found in the records of our legislature, a solemn decree for the periodical commemoration, by the whole country, of their virtues and exploits.* The loss and the ignominy

* The American *public* is by no means indifferent to the disgrace which this circumstance entails, nor unwilling to remove it.—We recollect with pleasure, the sensations excited among a numerous auditory of this city, by the following eloquent passage, in the able discourse pronounced by Joseph Hopkinson, esq. at the late anniversary meeting of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

“But shall any future patriot hope to have his memory perpetuated, when Washington lies neglected? Not a stone tells the stranger where the hero is laid. No proud column declares that *his country is grateful!*

are for us : THEY cannot suffer in their fame, as long as there remain in the world, any genuine mementos of the present century. With regard to them, we may use the beautiful language which is ascribed by the historian Thucydides to Pericles, when commemorating the merits of those, who fought the battles of Athens.

" Bestowing thus their lives on the public, they have every one received a praise that will never decay ;—a sepulchre that will always be most magnificent : not that in which their bones lie mouldering, but that in which their fame is preserved, to be, on every occasion, where honour is the theme, eternally remembered. This whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men ; nor is it the inscription on the columns in their native soil alone that shows their

If but an infant perish, even before its smiles have touched a parent's heart, yet a parent's love marks with some honour the earth that covers it : 'Tis the last tribute which the humblest pay to the most humble.

" Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh ;
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd ;
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

The stranger who, in days to come, shall visit our shore, will exclaim, show me the statue of your Washington, that I may contemplate the majestic form that encompassed his mighty soul; that I may gaze upon those features once lighted with every virtue ; and learn to love virtue as I behold them. Alas ! there is no such statue. Lead me then, American, to the tomb your country has provided for her deliverer ; to the everlasting monument she has erected to his fame. Alas ! his country has not given him a tomb ; she has erected no monument to his fame. His grave is in the bosom of *his own soil*, and, the cedar, that was watered by his hand, is all that rests upon it. Tell me whence is this inhuman supineness ? Is it envy, jealousy, or ingratitude ? Or is it that, in the great struggle for power and place, every thing else is forgotten ; every noble, generous, and national sentiment disregarded or despised ? Whatever be the cause, the curse of ingratitude is upon us until it be removed."

merit, but the memorial of them, better, than all inscriptions, in every foreign nation, reposed more durably in universal remembrance, than on their tombs."

COLLECTANEA.

MAGNANIMITY.

MALCOLM III. King of Scotland, having received an information that one of his nobles had conceived a design against his life, he enjoined the strictest silence to the informer, and took no notice of it himself, till the person accused of this execrable treason came to his court, in order to execute his intention. The next morning he went to hunt, with all the train of his courtiers, and when they were got into the deepest woods of the forest, drew that nobleman apart from the rest of the company, and spoke to him thus: "Behold, we are here alone, armed and mounted alike. Nobody sees or hears us, or can give either of us aid against the other. If then you are a brave man, if you have courage and spirit, perform your purpose; accomplish the promise you have made to my enemies. If you think I ought to be killed by you, when can you do it better? when more opportunely? when more manfully?—Have you prepared poison for me? that is a womanish treason:—Or, would you murder me in my bed? an adulteress could do that:—Or, have you hid a dagger to stab me secretly! that is the deed of a ruffian. Rather act like a soldier; act like a man, and fight with me hand to hand; that your treason may at least be free from baseness."

At these words the traitor, as if he had been struck with a thunderbolt, fell at his feet, and implored his pardon. "Fear nothing; you shall not suffer any evil from me," replied the King, and he kept his word.

"How are you this morning" said Fawcet to Cooke, "Not at all *myself*," says the tragedian. "Then, I congratulate you," re-

plied Fawcet, "For be whoever else you will, you will be a *gainer* by the bargain."

SPEECHLESS LAWYERS.

THE Temple Corps, which was distinguished at a late review, by its plainly elegant dress and steady order, was inspected by the Earl of Harrington. As he rode along the line, before the review, his Lordship stopped to salute its commander, and said, "This is the *Law Association*, Sir?" "Yes, my Lord." To which the Earl rejoined, "I do not find any one that speaks a word; I never knew lawyers "so silent!" "We have *no pay*, my Lord," replied Colonel Erskine.

STEPHEN KEMBLE, of enormous rotundity of paunch, happening to pass through Newport market, the butchers set up their usual cry of "What d'ye buy? What d'ye buy!" Stephen parried this for some time, by saying, he did not want any thing. At last, a butcher starts from his stall, and eyeing Stephen's figure from top to bottom, which certainly would not lead one to think he fed on air, exclaimed, "Well, Sir, though you do not now want any thing, only say you buy your meat of me, and you will make my fortune."

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

SOME years ago the junior Sheridan, who inherits a large portion of the wit and genius of his father, was dining with a party of his father's constituents, at the Swan, in Stafford. Among the company were, of course, a great many shoemakers (I beg their pardon, I mean shoe manufacturers). One of the most eminent of them was in the chair, and, in the course of the afternoon, he called upon young Sheridan for a sentiment. This call not being immediately attended to, the president, in rather an angry tone, repeated it. Sheridan, who was entertaining his neighbour with a story, appeared displeased at this second interruption, and desiring a bumper might be filled, he gave—"May the manufacture of Stafford be *trampled upon* by all the world."

It is needless to say that this sentiment, given with apparent warmth, restored him to the good graces of the president.

Mr. Fox at Lausanne.

THE man of the people escaped from the tumult, the bloody tumult of the Westminster election, to the lakes and mountains of Switzerland ; and I was informed he was arrived at the Lyon d'or. I sent a compliment. He answered it in person, and settled at my house for the remainder of the day. I have eat, and drank, and sat up, and conversed with Fox in England ; but it never has happened, perhaps it never can happen again, that I should enjoy him as I did that day ; alone from ten in the morning till ten at night. Our conversation never flagged a moment ; and he seemed thoroughly pleased with the place and with his company. We had little politics : though he gave me, in a few words, such a character of Pitt as one great man should give of another, his rival—much of books, from my own, on which he flattered me very pleasantly, to Homer, and the Arabian Nights—much about the country ; my garden, (which he understands far better than I do) and, upon the whole, I think he envies me, and would do so were he minister. The following day he continued his journey to Bern and Zurich, and I have heard of him by various means. The people gaze on him as a prodigy ; but he shews little inclination to converse with them.—*Gibbon.*

A YOUNG man named Eretrius, was for a considerable time a follower of Zeno. On his return home, his father asked him, what he had learned. The other replied, that would hereafter appear. On this, the father being enraged, beat his son, who, bearing it patiently, and without complaining, said, he had learned this,—to endure a parent's anger.

PHOCION, son of Phocus, who had been the general of his countrymen, was condemned to death, and being in prison was about to drink the hemlock. When the executioner held out to him the cup, his relations asked, if he had any commands for his son. "I order him," said Phocion, "to bear no animosity, nor revenge against the Athenians on account of this poison, which I now drink." They who do not admire and praise this action, cannot, in my opinion, have any conception of what is great and noble.

THE CLASSICS.

"To those who are emulous to form a correct taste, and desirous of cultivating their genius, let me warmly recommend the assiduous study of the ancient classics, both Greek and Roman; without a considerable acquaintance with which, no man can be reckoned a polite scholar: besides, he will want many assistances for writing and speaking well, which the knowledge of such authors would afford him. And in all countries it is in proportion, I believe, as the classics are studied and admired, neglected or contemned, that good taste and good composition will flourish or decline. The excellent writings of the Greeks and Romans, which, with deserved veneration, have through so many ages been handed down to us, are finished and noble patterns of learning and politeness. It is that wonderful and noble scope of genius and invention, that uniform propriety of sentiment and purity of expression, together with a superior neglect of all ornament but such as is manly and becoming, which gave their compositions such a dignity throughout, as, at the same time that they excite our admiration, command our respect."

STAGE DEATHS.

THE practice of killing on the stage was carried to the greatest excess by our old writers; it is now used with greater moderation, but whether it is really a beauty or a fault, may be questionable. The sudden, and sometimes unexpected blow, as when Othello kills himself, or as Eu-

phrasia stabs Dionysius in the Grecian Daughter, has certainly a very fine theatrical effect ; and the dying agonies of a Siddons, or a Garrick, are truly affecting. But a stage heaped with *dead bodies*, panting from the exertion of the preceding scene, is likely to excite other emotions than those of pity and terror. I should imagine the *general stabbing scene* in *Titus Andronicus*, if represented, would hardly be less risible than the catastrophe of Tom Thumb.—It has often been a subject of wonder, how this monstrous farce has held its place in all the editions of Shakespeare. I cannot think he wrote a line in it, though if, as Theobald suggests, it appeared before Shakespeare wrote for the stage, two verses in it pleased him so well, that he has twice closely imitated them.

She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd,
She is a woman, therefore may be won.

Titus Andronicus.

She's beautiful, and therefore may be woo'd,
She is a woman, therefore to be won.

1st part of Henry VI.

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd,
Was ever woman in this humour won?

Richard III.

Mr. Goodall, a learned Assistant at Eton.

THE same morning he married Miss Prior, daughter of one of the assistants, to the great astonishment of the scholars he attended his duty as a master. A luckless boy who had played truant on the supposition

“ That when a lady's in the case,
“ All other things, of course, give place,”

pleaded, as an excuse for his absence, that he really thought Mr. G. had a *prior* engagement.

National antipathy is the basest, because the most illiberal and illiterate of all prejudices.

HEROISM.

To see a brave spirit contending with great calamities, and breasting them with an unconquered resolution, is to see him in a car of triumph. It is to behold the man, divested of the garments which adorn, or the veil that conceals him ; it is to see him as he is : and to admire, venerate, and emulate a victory, which kings often essay in vain ; a victory which awes oppression, commands respect, and wins the very soul of sensibility,— who, like Desdemona,

“ ——Sits such things to hear ;
And loves him, for the dangers he has past.”

With some natures such wooing “is witchcraft !”

POETRY.

THE BIRTH OF WIT.

As Fancy stray'd to gather flow'rs,
And breathe the scented sweets of May,
To vine-clad hills and shady bow'rs,
The maiden bent her silent way.

Young Bacchus saw the wand'ring maid ;
Her charms inflamed his eager soul :
And while she slept beneath the shade,
The God upon her slumbers stole.

Time crown'd the sacred blest embrace,
And gave the pair an offspring fit ;
A boy, with every charming grace,
And call'd the heavenly infant, *Wit*.

THE SNOW-DROP.

TORN rudely from its native bed.
In William's hand the modest flow'r
Hung bashfully its drooping head,
And own'd a warmth unfelt before.

But soon—remov'd to Anna's breast,
It rear'd again its drooping head
For there the modest flow'r confess'd
The coldness of its native bed.

THE POOR-HOUSE.

CRABBE'S Burrough, cannot be read without the reader's feeling how deep an interest, may be excited by humble objects! The following extract displays truth as well as pathos.

' YOUR plan I love not :—with a number you
Have plac'd your poor, your pitiable few ;
There, in one house, for all their lives to be,
The pauper-palace which they hate to see :
That giant building, that high bounding wall,
Those bare worn walks, that lofty thund'ring hall !
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreadful hour,
Those gates and lock, and all those signs of power :
It is a prison with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame :—
‘ Alas ! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell,
They've much to suffer, but have nought to tell :
They have no evil in the place to state,
And dare not say, it is the house they hate :
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining, for 'tis there they live.
Grandsires are there, who now no more must see,
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee
The lost lov'd daughter's infant progeny :
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.
Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run ;
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one "Good night ?"
Yes, she is here ; but nightly to her door
The son, still lab'ring can return no more.
Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husbands, children, plenty, ease bereft ;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed

Was soften'd, soften'd in the humble bed :
 But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
 And not one soft'ning object for relief.

Who can, when here, the social neighbour meet ?
 Who learn the story current in the street ?
 Who to the long-known intimate impart
 Facts they have learn'd, or feelings of the heart ?—
 They talk, indeed ; but who can choose a friend,
 Or seek companions at their journey's end ?—
 'What, if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
 Is it not worse, no prospects to enjoy ?
 'Tis cheerless living in such bounded view,
 With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new ;
 Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep,—
 The day itself is, like the night, asleep :
 Or on the sameness, if a break be made,
 'Tis by some pauper to his grave convey'd ;
 By smuggled news from neighb'ring village told,
 News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old ;
 By some new inmate doom'd with them to dwell,
 Or justice come to see that all goes well ;
 Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
 On the black footway winding with the wall,
 'Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.

Here too the mother sees her children train'd,
 Her voice excluded and her feelings pain'd :
 Who govern here, by general rules must move,
 Where ruthless custom rends the bond of love.
 Nations, we know, have nature's law transgress'd,
 And snatch'd the infant from the parent's breast ;
 But still for public good the boy was train'd ;
 The mother suffer'd, but the matron gain'd :
 Here nature's outrage serves no cause to aid ;
 The pang is felt, but not the *Spartan* made.

Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
 By worthy deeds acquir'd in better days,
 Breathes a few months ; then, to his chamber led,
 Expires,—while strangers prattle round his bed.'